

SAE

Supervised Agricultural Experience

Supervised Agricultural Experience Fact Sheet SAE Assessment

As with any educational exercise, consistent and ongoing assessment is an essential measurement of program success. An SAE is no exception. Evaluating SAEs and being able to show tangible results not only benefits the student, but strengthens agricultural programs on the local, state and national level. In the case of SAEs, assessment is especially important because an SAE is an integral component of agricultural education and, therefore, comprises part of a student's class grade.

A variety of assessment tools can be used by teachers to evaluate SAEs. (See Section IX on "SAE Assessment Tools" in this handbook for examples.) Regardless of the method used, SAE evaluation is a cooperative effort between the student and teacher, parent or guardian and/or industry partner. Since SAE is an individualized learning program, assessment is also individually-focused. That is why agriculture teachers schedule on-site visits to a student's home and/or place of business as part of their educational planning. This provides an opportunity to customize the SAE according to the student's interests, discuss objectives, review record books, measure progress, observe skills and offer suggestions. The first visit typically occurs in the summer before the school year (including incoming freshmen) with subsequent visits made thereafter.

An assessment is based on a range of factors related to student performance. Some of the most widely used criteria by teachers in this process include:

- Thoughtfulness of SAE planning and implementation;
- Maintenance of accurate records (record books and daily logs/journals);
- Use of time management and decision making skills;
- Evidence of program improvement and development; and
- Ability to demonstrate and apply new skills or proficiencies.

It is important to note that assessment is not meant to discourage or intimidate students. Rather it is an interactive tool for setting goals, promoting sound business habits such as record keeping, learning from experience (including mistakes) and providing recognition opportunities. SAE assessment challenges students to make the most of their experience in a supportive environment, reinforcing agricultural education's focus on "learning by doing." It also enables teachers to see how students apply classroom skills and competencies in the workplace, and adjust their curriculum if necessary to accommodate changing industry demands.